

value of Rs. 30 to 40 lakhs was being consumed in the State every year and the Government also derived a revenue of about Rs. 16 lakhs. But the merchants were put to considerable difficulties in the matter of importing the article. If the cultivation of tobacco were allowed in the State, nearly Rs. 20 lakhs that went outside would remain in the State itself and benefit the State, the merchant and the cultivator. It would also be a means of livelihood to thousands of poor people. The cultivation of tobacco was going on on a large scale in the Madura District and in several parts of the Tinnevely District and had been extended up to half a mile from the Aramboly frontier. The subject was brought forward at the eleventh session of the Assembly but, to their great disappointment, it was ordered to lie over. It would be a very profitable concern, if the people of South Travancore were allowed to cultivate tobacco. The Member, therefore, requested that the present representation at least be favourably considered by Government. He then referred to the difficulties experienced by the merchants of South Travancore owing to Jaffna tobacco not being stocked in the Kottar bankshall and their having to get their supplies from Quilon and Alleppey, and prayed for early orders to store the requisite quantity in the Kottar bankshall. The Member also referred to the necessity for the early extension of the Railway to South Travancore.

*Dewan's reply.*—The suggestions will be considered.

## 25. Suggestions for the development of commerce.

*Mr. M. L. Janardhanan Pillai* (Member, Trading Classes, Alleppey) began by saying that the export and import trade of the country had not yet been established by the sons of the soil on any sound and satisfactory basis. In the first place, the people had no commercial education and did not know where and to whom they should look up to for sound and safe guidance. There was no officer in the State service with up-to-date knowledge and experience to help the trading classes with advice and there was no non-official body either for the purpose. It was a mistake to suppose that any one could handle the difficult problems connected with trade. Even those actually in the line and having considerable experience felt that they were every day face to face with fresh difficulties in tackling business questions. It was, however, a matter for gratification that the Government had already proposed to take up the question of commercial education and had felt the necessity for men trained in such subjects as Book-keeping, Accountancy and Commercial Correspondence. The Member urged the early commencement of the proposed Commercial School and suggested that it should be started at Alleppey, the chief commercial centre of the State. He also explained the lines on which such a school should be worked and said that it should, besides training men as book-keepers, clerks and accountants, also aim at helping the formation of a class of men with a wide outlook on commercial subjects. The Member next spoke about the absence of an agency for furnishing correct information to the local merchants about the conditions of trade, and the rates prevailing in the various markets of the world, the want of accurate knowledge of which was a serious impediment to the development of trade. Another serious difficulty which the Travancore merchants laboured under was the want of shipping facilities at Alleppey, which led to a diversion of the bulk of the trade to the Cochin port. With the development of the Cochin harbour, Alleppey would suffer still more unless prompt arrangements were made to improve the existing conditions of the port. Steamers fought shy of the Alleppey port for want of necessary facilities. The required number of boats were not available for the transshipment of cargo from the steamers. The slowness in transport by ordinary boats and the absence of a safe anchorage for boats to take shelter under during bad weather were other serious drawbacks to the development of shipping. The Member also represented that the Travancore merchants should obtain the same sort of treatment and facilities from the steamship companies as the European firms. He next urged the formation of a Commercial Intelligence department, on up-to-date lines under an Indian Officer of sound commercial experience assisted by a Committee of officials and non-officials who should be in a position to offer advice on correct data, especially in the matter of international trade development. Lastly, the Member referred to the announcement made in the opening Address in regard to the deputation of an officer to study the working of the

Banks in Bombay, Mysore and Baroda and earnestly hoped that a State Bank would soon be established with a view to expand trade, develop commerce and promote industries and that it would be worked on such lines as would be of real help to the local merchant and trader. In conclusion, he assured the Government of the extreme readiness of the mercantile community to pay any new taxes, rates and cesses that Government might think fit to impose in view to redress their longstanding grievances.

*Dewan's reply.*—I do not think you can expect a lengthy reply from me now. I thank you for the valuable suggestions you have made and the very thoughtful way in which you have handled your subject. If there is any department of administration in which Government have to take the public into their confidence and to consult them, it is pre-eminently the Department of Commerce and Industry. As I have already told you, I shall during my visit to Alleppey consult non-official opinion not only on the lines on which commercial education should be started, but in regard to the general question of trade and commerce also. I am sure I shall receive from you the ample measure of co-operation that I expect of you.

**26. Increased help from Government in the interests of the mercantile community of Travancore.**

*Mr. Ousep Chacko* (Member, Trading Classes, Changamachery) said that the Government aid was not sufficient in the field of commerce and as such the commerce of the country was not progressing. He suggested that for the improvement of commerce, trade experts might be appointed by Government in the important commercial centres in India with a view to enable the people to know the needs of foreign markets, and urged the necessity of opening a State Bank with branches at all important commercial centres for the use and convenience of the traders and also the opening of a Chamber of Commerce which would tend to the development of commerce. He also requested the Government to take steps to bring all the hundi merchants and their hundi business under Government control and supervision by providing for registration and periodical inspection and examination of their accounts, so that people who had deposited money with them might not be left completely helpless in case the hundi merchants turned insolvent.

*Dewan's reply.*—As regards the State Bank, reply has already been given. The creation of a Chamber of Commerce is a matter for the merchants themselves. As regards hundi merchants, the matter will be looked into.

**(5) MARINE.**

**27. Extension of the proposed Cochin harbour to Arukutti.**

*Mr. Adichan Narayanan* (Member, Shertallay Taluk) began by saying that, just as Bombay which was but an unimportant marshy settlement at the beginning of the 18th century had now become the wealthiest city in the whole of Asia, so would Cochin, after the completion of the proposed harbour, outbeat Bombay within the next 20 years. Only in States with good ports would there be commercial and industrial development which alone would tend to material prosperity and real progress. Travancoreans were being denied the advantages attendant on the transactions of export and import of goods in a harbour. A good harbour was a source of great income to the State. That was one of the main reasons which weighed with the British Government and the Cochin Darbar to undertake the development of the Cochin harbour. Travancoreans were not envious at the prospect of Cochin improving but only it should not be at the risk of Travancore. The statesmen of Travancore had from olden times realised the importance of providing it with good ports. Before opening a port at Alleppey, Quilon answered for all practical purposes the requirements of a port for Travancore. But, as it was found that the natural advantages of the Cochin port attracted the major portion of the commerce of Travancore, that far-seeing statesman, Raja Kesava Das, resolved 150 years ago to open a new port at Alleppey, even to the prejudice of the Quilon port, and invited foreign merchants to settle there, granting them several concessions. During the long interval that had elapsed, no improvement had been effected to this port to enable vessels to call there throughout the year. It was the duty of Government to